

SOME PAPUAN CEREMONIAL APPURTENANCES USED
AT THE KAIVA KUKU* AND SEMESE DANCES.

Illustrated from Specimens in the Queensland Museum Collections.

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(Plates IV. to XI.)

* Dr. C. G. Seligman: *The Melanesians of British New Guinea (Kaiva Kuku)*, 1910, p. 299

PLATE IV.

A double-headed head-dress worn at Kaiva Kuku ceremonial dances at Orokolo, Gulf of Papua.

The figure supported on the lower mask is that of a crocodile with a human head—seen sideways; total height 4 ft. 1½ in., width 2 ft. 11½ in., length 7 ft. The whole object is mounted on a cane framework, which is covered with either coconut or sago palm fibre, and ornamented in red, white, and black. The frames are made of lawyer cane, previously dried in the sun and scraped and split into the various thicknesses required, many kinds of grasses being used for binding purposes. The sago-bark is well beaten out, cleaned and dried in the sun, and laid aside ready for use, but is again thoroughly washed in water when put on the frame, so that when finished a good tight surface is obtained. The colours used are generally white lime, obtained from crushed shells, charcoal, a yellow colour made from the leaves of a yellow croton, and a red bark powder or lime stained. Strips of fibre and leaves with white feathers decorate the sides of the animal. The masks take usually from three to four months in the making. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/215.

THE PAPUANS OF THE GULF DISTRICT, BRITISH NEW GUINEA.



A HEAD-DRESS WORN AT THE KAIVA KUKU CEREMONIES AT OROKOLO.

Specimen No. : Q.M. E.13/215.

PLATE V.

Fig. 1.—A double-faeed Papuan head-dress (same history). Total height 4 ft. 8 in., greatest width 4 ft. across. The materials used and the mode of manufacture of this head-dress is the same as that adopted in all specimens of the same kind from this locality.

Fig. 2.—The same mask, tilted, to show the second human face underneath.

Specimen No. : Q.M. E.13/245.



CEREMONIAL HEAD-DRESS WITH TWO FACES, WORN AT THE KAIYA KUKU DANCES AT OROKOIO.

PLATE VI.

Four Papuan ceremonial head-dresses (same history).

Fig. 1.—Height 2 ft. 7 in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/231.

Fig. 2.—A mask supporting an imitation banana tree. The broad leaves are provided with streamers. The bunch of bananas, hanging about midway, is somewhat obscured by drapings from above. Total height 4 ft. 11 in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/239.

Fig. 3.—Mask with hair-pad. The human hair is matted together with burrs. Total height 2 ft. 3 in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/236.

Fig. 4.—The upper portions of this head-dress are decorated with native bark cloth, painted similarly to tappa cloth, and dyed grass fringes; the whole is finished off with a crest and slit forming an imitation of the cassowary's comb or helmet. Unfortunately this is not shown in the figure, the helmet-like crest only coming to light after the photograph had been taken. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/241.



CEREMONIAL HEAD-DRESSES WORN BY THE KAIVA KUKU AT OROKOLO.

PLATE VII.

Five head-dresses of the Kaiva Knku (same history).

Fig. 1.—A mask slightly incomplete. The uppermost portion should be provided with bunches of rattling seed-pods, which keep up a continual noise whilst the performer's body is in motion. Height 3 ft. 2 in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/238.

Fig. 2.—Small head-dress, without a top. Dimensions, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. \times $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/227.

Fig. 3.—A fish emblem, seen sideways, mounted on a mask. Total height 4 ft. 7 in., length of fish 4 ft. 5 in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/216.

Fig. 4.—A simple mask made from a long strip of fibre bark and turned over into two equal parts, the sides of which are then sewn together. Total height with fringe of leaves, 2 ft. 1 in. \times 12 in. across. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/247.

Fig. 5.—A double-faced head-dress, standing 4 ft. 5 in. in height, the greatest width being 3 ft. 5 in. from wing to wing. Strips of bark-cloth hang down over framework. The upper and smaller head is provided with a supply of human hair, matted together with burrs, which are in reality fragments of the echinate capsules of a Euphorbiaceous plant. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/240.



CEREMONIAL HEAD-DRESSES WORN AT THE KAIYA KUKU DANCES AT OROKOLO.

PLATE VIII.

Fig. 1.—Ceremonial head-dress with two wings mounted on a cane brim. Height 2 ft. 6 in., width 2 ft. 3 in. Used at the Kaiva Kuku dances, Orokolo, B.N.G. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/233.

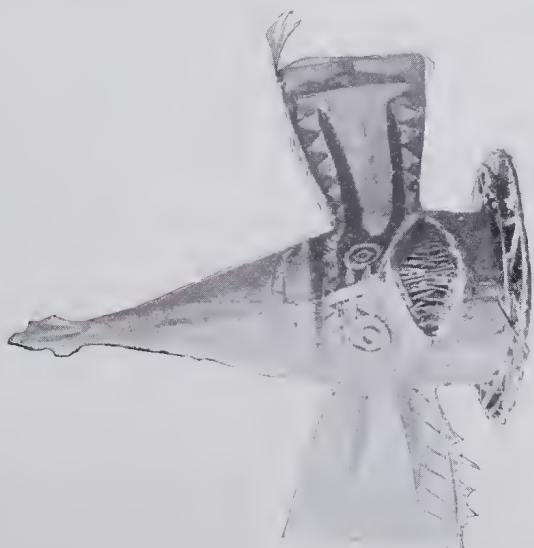
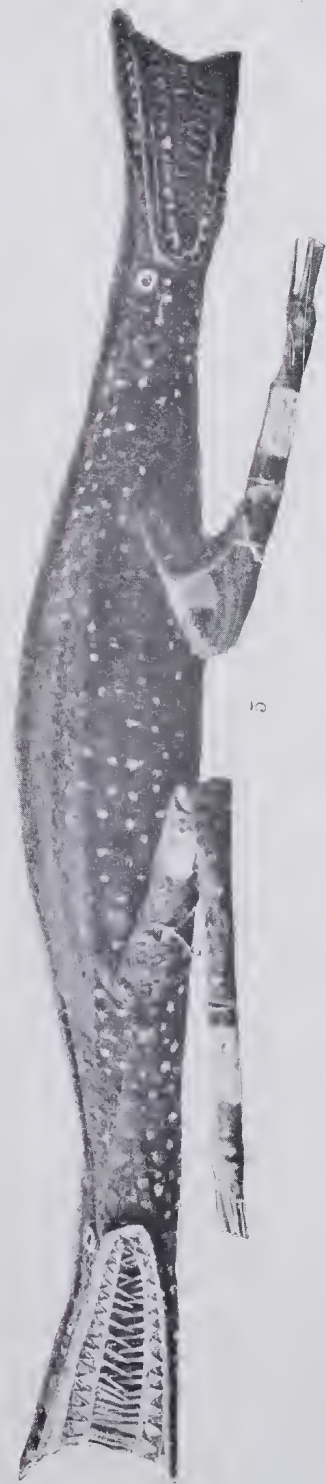
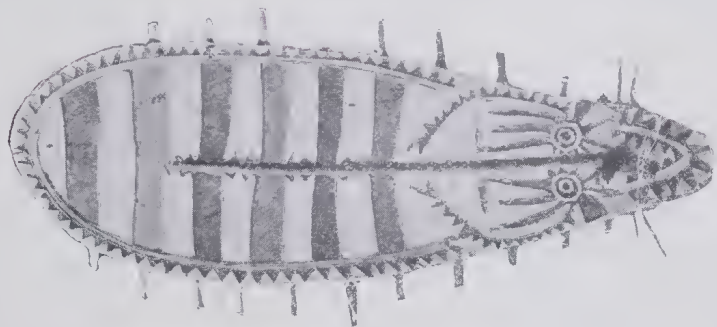
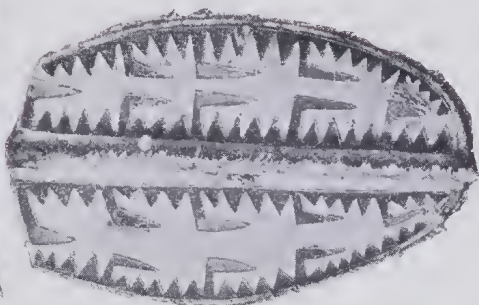
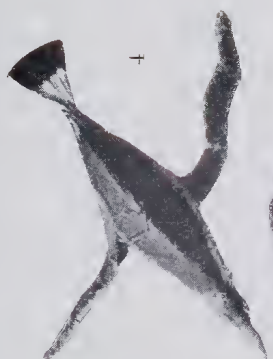
Fig. 2.—Head-dress with a garfish-like mouth. Height 3 ft. 11½ in.; 1 ft. 11 in. in widest part. Worn at the "Semese" * dances at Waipua, Purari Delta, British New Guinea. The "Semese" are not ancestral dances as the Kaiva Kuku appear to be, but are more elaborate and exclusive, and undoubtedly war dances. These commence usually about 10 or 11 o'clock at night. A party marches along the beach fully armed, with warlike antics and beating of drums, wandering sometimes for two or three miles from the Eravos before commencing the advance; a warlike party from another Eravo goes in an opposite direction, subsequently meeting them for the final onslaught. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/226.

Fig. 3.—Dancing object made in imitation of a shield; cane frame covered on one side only with coconut fibre cloth and ornamented in red, black, and white. Dimensions, 2 ft. 7 in. × 1 ft. 8 in. Used at the Kaiva Kuku dances, Orokolo. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/225.

Fig. 4.—Imitation of a bird, representing a booby or gannet bird (*Sula* sp.). Used at the Kaiva Kuku ceremonials, Orokolo. Length 2 ft. 2 in. × 2 ft. ½ in. across from wing to wing. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/234.

Fig. 5.—A double-headed eroeodile. Black with white spots; 6 ft. long, girth of body 2 ft. 10½ in. (Same history.) Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/214.

* The meaning of "Semese" in Papuan dialect is "Warrior."



CEREMONIAL APPURTENANCES.

PLATE IX.

Five head-dresses (same history).

Fig. 1.—With hair-pad; 1 ft. 3 in. high and 1 ft. 1½ in. across. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/235.

Fig. 2.—A true mask. The back of this head-dress is provided with a piece of bark cloth, which hangs and covers the neck of the performer. Dimensions, 1 ft. 10½ in. × 1 ft. 4 in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/228.

Fig. 3.—With hair-pad. Dimensions, 1 ft. 5 in. × 1 ft. 2½ in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/242.

Fig. 4.—Mask with wings. Dimensions, 3 ft. 1 in. × 1 ft. 1 in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/232.

Fig. 5.—Mask with a few tufts of hair scattered here and there on surface, provided with hanging leaves round edge. Dimensions, 1 ft. 1 in. × 10 in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/243.



CEREMONIAL MASKS AND HEAD-DRESSES FROM OROKOLO.

PLATE X.

Fig. 1.—Dancing head-dress, measuring 3 ft. 11 in. \times 1 ft. 4½ in., provided with a fish-like mouth and two prominent round spaces for the eyes. The two sticks to which mask is attached at the back are held in the hand. Used at the "Semese" dances. Locality: Purari Delta, British New Guinea. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/246.

Fig. 2.—Head-dress with a representation of the hornbill on top, side view. Dimensions: Total height 4 ft. 4 in., length of bird 3 ft. 4 in., from wing to wing 4 ft. 0¾ in. Worn at the Kaiva Kuku danees, Orokolo, B.N.G. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/217.

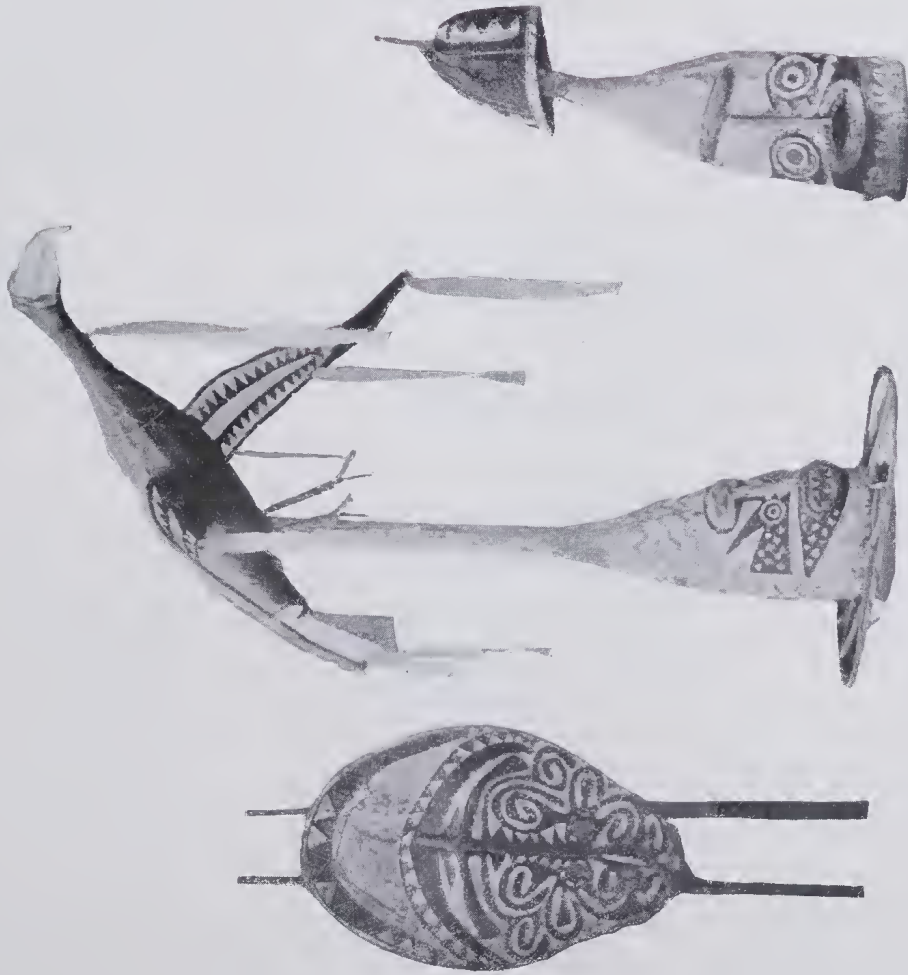
Fig. 3.—Head-dress with cap; 2 ft. 8 in. high, 9 in. across. Worn at the Kaiva Kuku ceremonies, Orokolo, B.N.G. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/229.

NOTES.—These appurtenances are held in great reverence; strangers are only allowed to inspect them under protest and disfavour, and they are kept in the Eravos which are religiously shut up.

The ceremonies are often kept up incessantly for days and nights together, and when the dances are over practically all the masks, &c., are gathered into a large heap, perhaps some 200 or 300 of them, and burnt. It is consequently with great difficulty that these objects can be obtained; the Papuans do not like parting with them at all, but will occasionally do so (of late years) after the ceremonial glamour has worn off.

Women and children are never allowed under any circumstances to see the ceremonial appurtenances. Should they, however, do so, death is said to follow as a natural consequence—probably as the result of superstition and fear.

Mr. S. G. Macdonell, of Orokolo, to whom I am indebted for this information, tells me that there is, however, a form of Kaiva Kuku dance in which women and children are allowed to participate, but only a small mask is used, the number of them being restricted to two or three.



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CEREMONIAL MASK AND HEAD-DRESSES.

PLATE XI.

Four ceremonial "Hohaus"—carved shield-like tablets.

Used principally in the decoration of the "Eravos" (club-houses), and are supposed to keep away evil spirits. All are made of comparatively soft wood and are burned into shape with hot stones and trimmed with tomahawks. The surface of the under side is quite plain, and has no ornamentation of any kind. The carving is picked out in red, white, and black.

Fig. 1.—3 ft. 6½ in. × 9½ in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/223.

Fig. 2.—2 ft. 5½ in. × 5¾ in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/224.

Fig. 3.—3 ft. 2½ in. × 9¾ in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/221.

Fig. 4.—Provided with nose-ring; 2 ft. 11 in. × 8½ in. Specimen No.: Q.M. E.13/222.



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CARVED AND PAINTED WOODEN TABLETS FROM OROKOLO.